

VETERANS COORDINATING COUNCIL

MINUTES

CAMP GRAFTON, DEVILS LAKE, ND

July 18, 1988

The Veterans Coordinating Council met at Camp Grafton, Devils Lake, at 1:00 p.m., July 18, 1988.

Meeting called to order by President Jerome Berg.

Usual opening ceremonies.

General Macdonald welcomed the group and explained the guard function as it relates to the National Military Force and discussed other important guard matters. He then arranged slide presentation of the guard functions. This is available for other large groups around the State.

The minutes were read and corrections made and approved.

Additional bills were allowed. Treasurer's balance of \$3,124.34. Treasurer's report accepted and filed by motion. Passed.

Earl Redlin, American Legion, was elected President of the Council; Orlando V. "Duke" Ellingson was elected vice chairman; Ray Stelmachuk was elected treasurer. All by motions and a unanimous vote of the Council.

President Redlin then called for the reports of the Administrative Committees. Sub Committee Chairman Charles Godke reported that the Veterans Home needed help to promote the Home. Talked about a work incentive program for members, employees awards program, donations from private parties to purchase a video camera, the need to adjust membership contribution because of Federal regulations, PL 100-322 governing the amount of income in excess of \$9,940.00 per year. About 20 present members would be affected. He talked about capital improvements being budgeted for and further discussed the certificate of need issue. He spoke on need for legislation to obtain a loan from Bank of North Dakota to construct Nursing Home and remove the word domiciliary from the present law and insert the word "the" to be consistent with Federal laws. Budget request this year will be \$4,969,529.00. The increase over last biennium is to cover capital improvements.

Veterans Coordinating Council Minutes--continued

Page Two

July 18, 1988

Richard States reported on the Department of Veterans Affairs activities. Discussed the position opening left by John Berge. This position will be filled by someone who can function in training, claims and legislative liaison. Committee instructed the Commissioner to write a job description for this type of a position. He discussed the loan program and the geography and class of veterans covered by the loan program. Transferring of budget items and extension of loan program from two to four years repayment maximum.

Chairman Wagner explained the changes on the Committee. He was appointed Chairman and Paul Aaberg was appointed Secretary.

Earl Redlin reported on the Trust Fund Referral. Petition drive to date--465 petitions in, 23,074 valid signatures with petitions still out and coming in. Deadline for petitions is tenth of August. On the fifth of August at 1:30 p.m., the group will go to the Secretary of State's Office with 25,000 valid signatures. President Earl reiterated that the future of the veterans of North Dakota relied on this drive. Bob Hanson followed with comments on the drive and statistics on the investment of the Trust fund. He also spoke of a list of people who had money coming from the State that cannot be located. The Clubs could post this list to help locate these people.

Dr. Engstrom spoke on VA Hospital concerns. Recent budget laws will limit VA Hospital services the rest of the fiscal year and beyond. Some workload is mandatory and some discretionary. VA will have to cut Community Nursing Home Service. It would appear funding will be short for the next fiscal year due to several reasons. A lot of changes could be coming because of short funding. These are only estimates at this point. Dr. Engstrom spoke of the extension of the VA satellite clinic. It would appear that the funding could be a problem because of budget restrictions and attitude of the National system. New legislation mandates additional pay for weekend nursing and limits travel pay because of funding.

Jim Frank spoke on claims. Lots of claims money available but limited staff to process the claims. Ten years ago they had 24 people to process claims, now 16 people to do the work. A new radiation exposure law is now in effect. Service Officers will be asked to check their communities for veterans who were effected. There are 13-14 service connected disabilities that can result from this. Also he mentioned that tapes of records destroyed in the records section fire have been located and are being decoded. Jim asked that anyone who knew someone who was denied a claim because of records lost in the fire to reapply.

President Earl called for other legislative concerns. These were turned over to the Legislative Committee of the Council to include a request from the Veterans Home to change the laws in regard to 37-15-00.2, Define Veterans Home; 37-15.02, Long Term Care Facility; lastly, change in law regarding vouchering from veterans improvement fund. Also legislation to change the word "domiciliary" to "the". This would allow Nursing Home.

Veterans Coordinating Council Minutes--continued

Page Three

July 18, 1988

From the Department of Veterans Affairs a request to change the law allowing four years repayment rather than two years.

All Veterans Memorial Report given by Milt Kane. Ground breaking originally scheduled for Monday, August 29, has been changed to Saturday, August 27. Bid opening August 6. Plaque bids have been accepted. Funds are slow at coming, \$175,000 have been collected so far. VFW Commander James Gorman has taken the Memorial as his annual project.

Leo Swenson reported on several laws governing employment matters. JTPA is still an active program. Dennis Mock reported for Mike Deisz regarding Veteran Employment on a state level. Veterans job preference needs constant monitoring. The LVERS are assisting in working with veterans through the Service Officers and community activities.

Report from veterans organizations.

American Legion Convention dates for 1989--June 17-20, Bismarck. Submitted membership report, 28,616 members. Legion has collected \$839.00 for trust fund campaign.

VFW Convention dates for 1989--June 1-4, Grand Forks. 14,023 members.

DAV Convention dates for 1989--May 4-6, Bismarck. To date no funds for the Trust Fund campaign have been earmarked. This will be taken care of. 4,100 members.

AMVETS Convention dates for 1989--June 23-25, Bismarck. No money collected as yet for the Trust Fund Campaign. Membership to date 2007.

VVA--No dates set as of yet. 831 Members.

POW Convention dates for 1989--May 19-21, Fargo. 167 Members. Walter Enget Commander reporting.

DAV Deer Hunt has not been set yet. Population of deer in Camp is down. Bob Evans moved the Committee who handled this in the past be the same, second by Bill Disher. Carried.

Bob Hannah moved that the Secretary of the Service Officers Association receive minutes of meeting. Bob Evans second. Carried.

Leo Swenson mentioned October 1 a TV Education program will go on the air on the Public TV Station. Program "For Veterans Only" would show once a week. Dave Schmidt spoke on a Public TV Program being put together by Prairie Public TV to be aired in October.

Veterans Coordinating Council Minutes--continued
Page Four
July 18, 1988

President Redlin spoke on the political aspects of veterans issues during the upcoming legislative session. He cautioned the members about taking sides and that we needed the entire political body to accomplish our goals. The future of the veterans of the state rest on the Trust Fund issue. Be optimistic.

He also spoke on and asked for suggestions on campaign materials to be used without spending a lot of money. The final vote is the key to the issue. Advertising is important. It takes money. Letters to the editor are effective. President Redlin reminded the group this is an opportunity to renew the respect of the veteran.

Calvin Hall made a motion that the campaign committee be authorized to determine the priorities of advertisements to be used within available authorized funds. Second by Bob. Passed unanimously.

Vern Useldinger moved that the Committee be authorized to use \$1,500.00 from the Council account for campaign funds. Second by Joe O'Brien. Discussion. Passed unanimously.

Motion by Joe O'Brien that President Earl Redlin be congratulated by the Council for his efforts in the Trust Fund campaign. Second by Elmer Ekern. Passed unanimously.

Moved by Bob Hannah and second by James Gorman that the Council sponsor the legislative rally as it has in the past. Motion passed unanimously.

Leo Swenson commented that any changes in veterans employment laws might not be appropriate. Earl Redlin is chairman of the Legislative Committee.

Time and place of next meeting was set for Tuesday, September 20, 1988, at Carrington, starting at 1:00 p.m., VFW Club.

Meeting adjourned.

Submitted by

Milton W. Kane
Secretary

vio
July 26, 1988

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